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# Saturday Magazine.

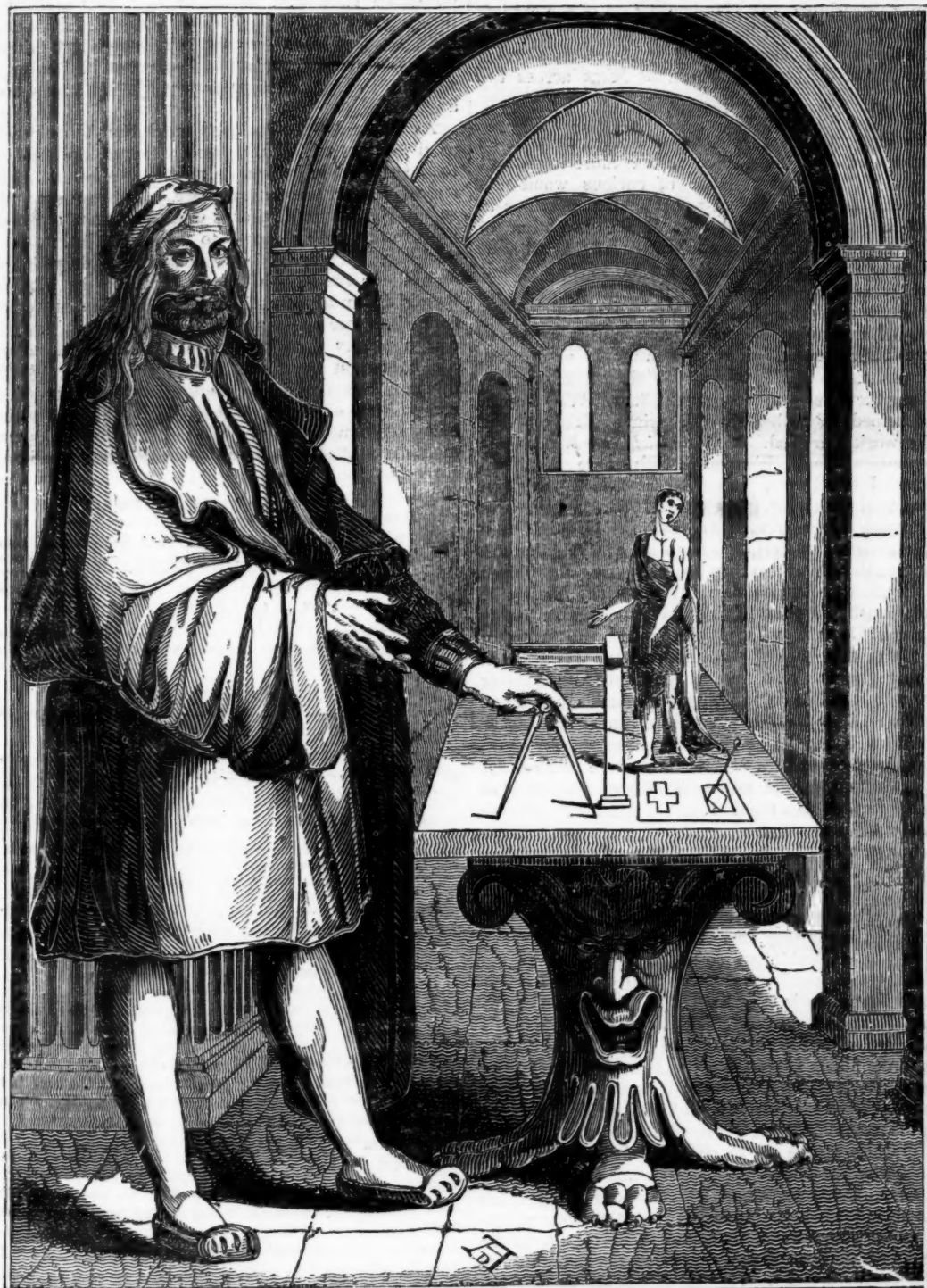
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UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION  
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ALBERT DURER: BORN 1471, DIED 1528.

## ALBERT DURER.

GERMANY may be considered the birth-place of that kind of engraving, which is performed with a view to its being printed on paper. It is difficult to fix upon the exact time of the discovery; but some of the first specimens of cuts were made on blocks of wood, and engraved on cards, as early as the year 1376. Others, consisting of rude outlines of saints, and of tales relating to the Roman Catholic church, were put forth, mostly without date, in the cities of Mentz, Strasburg, and Haerlem. One of the earliest that bears a date (1423), belongs to Earl Spencer, the subject of it being *St. Christopher*, so called from the story of his bearing the infant Jesus across the sea.

Here then was the germ of that art of printing which John Guttenberg of Mentz (in 1440), as well as Koster and Faust extended to far more important purposes. A great number of curious wood-cuts now exist, which are of an age evidently previous to what is generally called that of the invention of printing; and the circumstance of these being without a date or name of the artist, seems to imply, that they were not thought of sufficient consequence for such a distinction. By degrees, however, the style of engraving improved, and artists began to place their names, or more commonly *monograms*, being marks composed of their initials woven together. Among them, may be mentioned Michael Wolgemuth, who helped to embellish with prints a famous large folio work, entitled, *The Chronicle of Nuremberg*: this curious book, illustrated with more than two thousand wood-cuts, reckoning those that are given more than once over, came out in 1493. It professes to furnish figures *from the beginning of the world*, and contains views of Scripture histories, and of cities and scenery, the latter bearing scarcely any resemblance to the places mentioned. But the chief honour of Wolgemuth, is that of his having been tutor to ALBERT DURER, who may be called the father of the German School of painting, and the inventor of etching: he was also an excellent and indefatigable engraver, a writer on painting, perspective, geometry, and on civil and military architecture. But it is as an engraver that he is chiefly known to us; and we think we may venture to say, that there is no name so celebrated in the annals of engraving as that of the subject of this memoir.

Albert Durer was born in 1471, at Nuremberg, in Germany, a city famed at that time, as rich and free, prosperous in trade, and fond of the arts. Having made a slight beginning with his pencil in the shop of his father, who was a goldsmith, Albert rapidly advanced in painting and engraving, and at the age of twenty-six exhibited some of his works to the public. So highly was he thought of, that his prints found their way to Italy, where Marc Antonio Raimondi not only counterfeited on copper a whole set of beautifully-executed small wood-cuts of his, on subjects taken from the New Testament, but forged his well-known stamp\*; a piece of roguery which at once carried Durer into Italy to get redress. On his reaching Venice, the Senate of that place so far did him justice, as to order M. Antonio to efface the mark: they also forbade any one but the right owner to use it in future. To this event in his life was owing his introduction to that wonderful genius Raphael, who sought his acquaintance: and, in the simple fashion of the times, the new friends mutually exchanged portraits. His works quickly became the

rage: he received high praises from all quarters; and his style was copied by a first-rate Italian painter, Andrea del Sarto. The substantial rewards of merit kept pace with his fame. Having finished a picture of St. Bartholomew, for the Church dedicated to that saint at Venice, the work rose so high in public opinion, that Rodolph the Second, Emperor of Germany, sent orders to Venice, that it should be bought for him at any price, and brought to Prague, not by the common mode of carriage, but (to prevent its taking harm) on men's shoulders, by means of a pole. Durer's honours now flowed thick upon him; his fellow-citizens, proud of his talents, and equally so of his private virtues, chose him into the Council of Nuremberg; and the Emperor Maximilian sent him a pension, and a patent of nobility.

As Durer did not make so much use of the pencil as of the graver, his pictures are scarce, and seldom to be seen but in palaces or great men's houses. His engravings, on the contrary, are so numerous, as well as closely-laboured, that it would betoken a life of no common toil, directed to this one point, to have performed all those which are extant, and fairly allowed as his. In the British Museum, and in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, as well as in many other collections, are various specimens of his skill. His design proves vast invention: his copies of nature are bold and powerful, full of expression, though often extravagant and grotesque: his exactness in the composition of parts is also very striking; and he has given a neatness of finish to small points, where most draughtsmen, probably, would have sacrificed correctness to the general effect. From his power and simplicity in copying nature, as well as from his attention to particulars, the admirers of Durer have called him, by analogy, the Homer of artists, while others, from the wild and romantic spirit of his works, have compared him to our English poet, Spenser, who, in his *Faerie Queen*, has conveyed so many dark and wondrous legends, and by the magical art of description, has dressed up fiction to look like truth.

One of Durer's best pieces, on wood, is that of *St. Hubert at the Chase*. The Saint is seen kneeling before a stag, which has a crucifix between its horns, while around him are hounds in various attitudes, surprisingly true to nature. Another is an armed knight on horseback, attended by Death (also on horseback), and followed by a frightful fiend, the group having almost as much of the ludicrous as the terrible; this is called by some *Death's Horse*, and by others *The Worldly Man*. But, perhaps, the most remarkable of all his prints is that of *Melancholy*, which conveys the idea of her being the parent of Invention; it is a female form, sitting on the ground, her features marked with the deepest and most solemn shades of thought, and her head resting pensively upon her hand; above, before, and around her, are a multitude of emblems of science, and instruments of study. This composition, it has been observed, is interesting on another account; namely, as a true picture of the times when it was engraved; for precisely thus was attention perplexed and distracted on most philosophical subjects, in the age of Albert Durer; and as he himself was author of seven treatises, most of which are on the metaphysics of Art, he had probably experienced much of that sort of melancholy, which proceeds from mental weariness and disgust—the usual end of such studies. In this view, the proverb might be true of him, “the painter paints himself!” But poor Durer had other sources of melancholy, which may help us in coming to this conclusion. Although amiable in conduct and

\* See the Monogram (A. D.) in the Engraving, near the left foot of the figure.

manners; a lover of modest mirth, esteemed, and even beloved, by his brethren in art, respected by his fellow-citizens, and distinguished by his monarch, he had a private woe which imbibed all his cup of honour: he had a shrew for his wife. Yet, as another proof that beauty and a sweet temper are not necessarily united, we are informed that, in painting the Virgin Mary, he took her face for a model. His domestic trials he bore with calmness for a time, but at last he escaped, for rest from her unkindness, to Flanders, finding an asylum in the house of a brother in profession and fame; but she discovered him in his quiet retreat, and prevailed upon him, by earnest promises of amendment, to return to his home. Unfortunately, however, for him and for the world, her ill disposition returned too, triumphed over the strength of his constitution, and hurried him to the grave before his time. He died in 1528, at his native city of Nuremberg, aged fifty-seven. A Latin inscription, to the following effect, was engraved on his sepulchre in the cemetery of St. John:—

TO THE MEMORY OF ALBERT DURER,  
ALL THAT WAS MORTAL OF ALBERT DURER IS PLACED  
IN THIS TOMB. MDXXVIII.

It is no wonder that the style of such a man was followed in Germany, and that his name has had its effect on the art which he professed, and we cannot conclude this memoir without observing that there is an engraver now living, who, although we do not mean to say that he copies Durer, often reminds us of that eminent artist. We allude to Moritz Retzsch, the spirited author of engraved illustrations of various popular works, the last and not the least beautiful being adapted to SCHILLER's poem, *The Song of the Bell*. It is true that these are merely outlines. The resemblance consists in his bold copying of nature in the figures; the grouping, the attitudes, and even costume of these; his minuteness in small parts, together with the whimsical freedom with which he throws in grotesque objects to assist in telling the story. In drawing any thing like a comparison between the two, we are glad of the opportunity of thus paying a tribute to the talents and industry of a living German artist.

#### ACCOUNT OF AN AVALANCHE

IN THE NOTCH OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS, U. S.

THE NOTCH, as the term implies, is a narrow pass, six miles in length, at the southern end of the White Mountains, the loftiest of which, Mount Washington, is 6234 feet above the level of the sea: but on each side of the pass, they rise only from 1800 to 2000, at an angle of about 45°, forming a valley less than half a mile in width between their basis, and down which the roaring Saco takes its course. The whole extent of their front is furrowed and scarred by the tremendous storm of July, 1826; and the valley, choked up with trees uprooted by the roots, remnants of bridges, buildings, and huge masses of rocks piled upon each other in the greatest disorder, presents what might be almost imagined as the wreck of nature.

A melancholy and interesting story is connected with this storm, which will, for years to come, be the cause of thousands making a pilgrimage to the White Mountains. I give it as related to me by one, who, though not an eye-witness, was in the immediate vicinity at the time it occurred: it was as follows. A farmer of the name of Willey, with his wife, five children, and two labourers, occupied a house with a small farm, at the upper end of the valley. They were much esteemed for their hospitable attentions to travellers, who, overtaken by night, sought shelter at their hearth, which was the only one in the Notch, their nearest neighbours being six miles distant. The hills, at that time, were thickly overgrown with forest trees and shrubs: nor had any thing ever occurred, to make them suspicious of the safety of their position, until

the descent of a small avalanche, or slide of earth, near the house, in the month of June, 1826, so terrified them by the havoc it caused, that they erected a small camp in what they deemed a more secure place, half a mile lower down the Saco. The summer had been unusually dry until the beginning of July, when the clouds collecting about the mountains, poured forth their waters, as though the floodgates of the heavens were opened, the wind blew in most terrific hurricanes, and continued with unabated violence for several days.

On the night of the twenty-sixth of the month, the tempest increased to a fearful extent; the lightning flashed so vividly, accompanied by such awful howling of wind and roaring of thunder, that the peasantry imagined the day of judgment was at hand. At break of day of the twenty-seventh, the lofty mountains were seamed with the numerous avalanches which had descended during the night. Every one felt anxious respecting the safety of the family in the valley, but some days elapsed before the waters subsided so far as to allow any inquiries to be made. A peasant swimming his horse across an eddy, was the first person who entered the Notch, when the terrible spectacle of the entire face of the hills having descended in a body, presented itself.

The Willeys' house, which remained untouched amidst the vast chaos, did not contain any portion of the family, whose bodies, with the exception of two children, were, after a search of some days, discovered, buried under some drift-wood, within 200 yards of the door, the hands of Miss Willey and a labourer grasping the same fragment. They had all evidently retired to rest, and most probably, alarmed by the sound of an avalanche, had rushed out of the house, when they were swept away by the overwhelming torrent of earth, trees and water. The most miraculous fact is, that the avalanche, descending with the vast impetuosity which an abrupt declivity of 1500 feet would give it, approached within four feet of the house, when suddenly dividing, it swept round, and carrying away an adjoining stable with some horses, it again formed a junction within a few yards of the front. A flock of sheep, which had sought shelter under the lee of the house, were saved; but the family had fled from the only spot where any safety could have been found, every other part of the valley being buried to the depth of several feet, and their camp overwhelmed by the largest avalanche which fell. A person standing in rear of the house, can now with ease step upon the roof, the earth forming such a perpendicular and solid wall.

A small avalanche was seen descending from one of the mountains some days after the above occurrence. The thick fine forest, at first moved steadily along in its upright position, but soon began to totter in its descent, and fell headlong down with redoubled fury and violence, followed by rivers of floating earth and stones, which spread devastation far and wide. The long heat of summer had so dried and cracked the ground, that the subsequent rains found easy admission under the roots of trees, which, loosened by the violence of the wind, required but little to set the whole in motion. There was no tradition of a similar descent having ever taken place; but, upon a close examination, traces of one, which had evidently occurred more than a century before, could be discovered amongst the forest.

Avalanches have descended from all the summits of the White Mountains, and continued to a great distance along the level ground; the largest, which is from Mount Jackson, being upwards of four miles in length.

[From *A Subaltern's Furlough in the United States and the Canadas*.]

It is certain that no height of honour, nor affluence of fortune, can keep a man from being miserable, when an enraged conscience shall fly at him and take him by the throat: so it is certain, that no temporal adversities can cut off those inward, secret, invincible supplies of comfort, which conscience shall pour in on distressed innocence in defiance of all worldly calamities.—SOUTH.

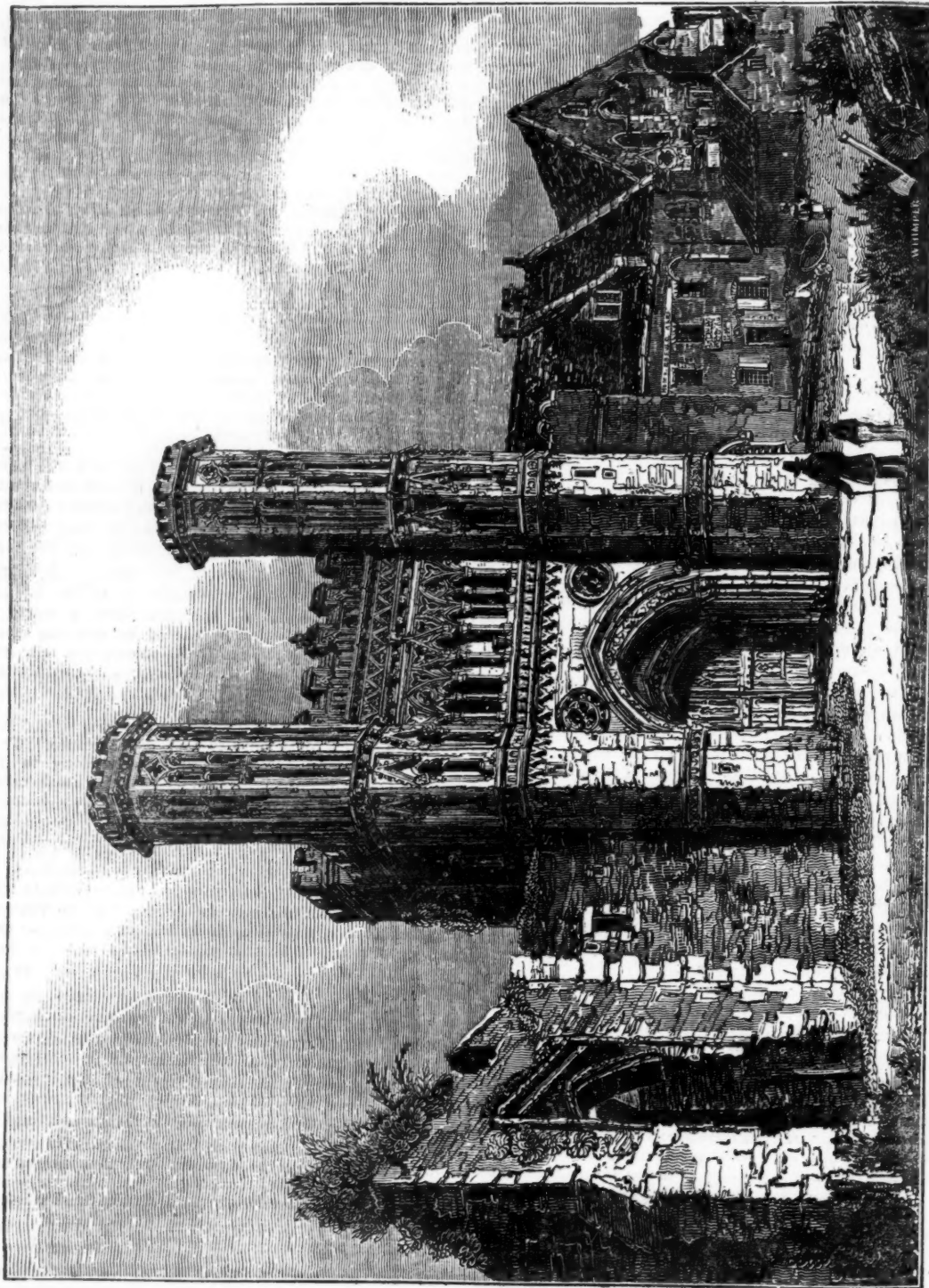
THE SABBATH.—Happy day for the body and soul of man! The world's birthday! Sign of an everlasting covenant between God and his faithful worshippers; day of Jehovah and his creation: and more honourable still, our Christian Sabbath, the birthday of the spiritual world; earnest of perpetual rest; day of the Lord and the redemption completed.—*Portraiture of a Christian Gentleman.*



## ST. AUGUSTINE'S ABBEY, CANTERBURY.

THIS interesting relic of a former age is standing in the condition represented in the engraving, beyond the walls of Canterbury, a short distance eastward of the Cathedral precincts. It was a part of the *Monastery of St. Augustine*, formerly one of the richest and largest

religious houses in the kingdom. Soon after the arrival of Augustine, the monk, who was sent hither by Pope Gregory, Ethelbert, king of Kent, joined him in founding this monastery, in the year 605. It was dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, but afterwards went by the name of *St. Augustine's*, having been fixed upon



THE GATE OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S ABBEY, CANTERBURY.

by that prelate as a burial-place for himself and his successors, and for the kings of Kent. Accordingly, we find that Ethelbert was buried in the church, and, near him, Bertha, his queen. His son and successor, Edwald, who built a chapel here, and his wife, Emma,

were also buried within the Abbey, as well as others of royal blood. It appears by Dugdale, who gives a print of it as it was in his time (1655), that many of the early Archbishops of Canterbury had this as their burial-place, a privilege which the monks soon

claimed as their right. But Cuthoert, who became Archbishop in 739, procured a licence from the Pope for himself and his successors, to be buried in *Christ Church Monastery* (the Cathedral); and, having obtained the king's confirmation of the grant, he gave orders, towards the close of his life, that no notice whatever of his decease should be given, till after his interment, lest the Benedictine monks of St. Augustine should demand his body for their church, to place it near the other archbishops, the showing of whose tombs had already become a source of great riches to the monastery. Cuthbert is said to have been the first in this country who allowed bodies to be buried near churches built within the walls of cities.

St. Augustine's Monastery, after being deprived by William the First, but afterwards restored by the same king, gradually rose to such eminence, that its privileges were equal, if not superior, to any in England; the Abbot being allowed a mint and coinage, a vote in Parliament as a Baron, and various other advantages. The last of its Abbots was John Essex, who, at the period of the Reformation under Henry the Eighth, is said to have refused to surrender the Abbey, until the sight of two pieces of cannon, placed on a hill near at hand, induced him to give up the keys. The annual revenues, on its dissolution, are stated to have been upwards of £1400.

The principal buildings were subsequently stripped of their lead, and some of them pulled down, the materials being converted to various uses, and other parts of the structure left to decay. Queen Mary granted the lands to Cardinal Pole, after whose death they reverted to the Crown; they were then given to Lord Cobham by Elizabeth, who kept court here for several days, during one of her progresses. The treason of Lord Cobham having occasioned their forfeiture, James the First transferred them to Robert Cecil, afterwards Earl of Salisbury, at a small annual rent. Since that time they have passed through the hands of the families of Wotton and Hales. The buildings were in the possession of Thomas Lord Wotton, at the marriage of King Charles the First with the Princess Henrietta, which took place within them, in the year 1623; and Charles the Second lodged here, on his passage through Canterbury, at his restoration.

Of this extensive Abbey, the wall of which enclosed a space of about sixteen acres of ground, and the length of whose west front alone was 250 feet, little now remains. At each extremity of the west front was a gate. These are still standing, and, as may be judged from the specimen of one of them given in this number, are, considering their age, in good preservation. *ST. AUGUSTINE'S GATE*, formerly the grand entrance, was erected about the year 1300. The centre is rich in ornamental work, consisting of small lancet-shaped arches, supported by light columns. Two lofty and graceful towers rise above the roof. The old wooden doors, under a finely-arched recess, are carved in the ancient style; and the vaulting within the entrance is light and beautiful. Over this gate, is a good-sized room, which possesses marks of antiquity, and is reported to be that in which Queen Elizabeth was entertained. It was afterwards used by some of the ruder inhabitants of Canterbury for the cruel and disgraceful sport of cock-fighting; but it is now unemployed. Proceeding from the door of this room, some narrow and time-eaten stone steps lead up to the top of the northern turret, within which are to be seen numerous grotesque carvings of the human face, distorted by the fertile ingenuity of the old sculptors. The opposite turret has a similar flight of stairs. The

heads, and other embellishments at the intersections of the arches in the lower parts of the building, are much darkened and disfigured, partly in consequence of the smoke and steam of a brewery, the business of which is carried on immediately within the gate, by a person of the appropriate name of *Beer*. No wanton injury is, however, done to any part of the structure; on the contrary, we are informed, that it is, as far as possible, kept up, and that a few years since, a sum was collected towards preventing its going entirely to decay.

Should any of our readers, when at Canterbury, be induced, by this description of the place, to enter the old gate of St. Augustine's Monastery, we would recommend them to view the ruined chapel; to mark the vast circuit of the Abbey-walls, which to this day show its extent; and (as a curious instance of ancient masonry,) to notice a remarkable piece of flint-work in the north-east corner within the gate, in which the flints are squared, and fitted smoothly together like so many bricks. The other gate at the southern end of the west front, is called the Cemetery gate, from its having led to the ancient burial-ground. It is very like that of St. Augustine's, but less venerable in appearance, having been altered and adapted to the purposes of a modern dwelling-house.

#### CHRISTMAS CUSTOM IN THE NORTH OF GERMANY.

THERE is a Christmas custom at Ratzeburg, which pleased and interested me. The children make little presents to their parents and to each other; and the parents to the children. For three or four months before Christmas, the girls are all busy, and the boys save up their pocket-money to make or purchase these presents. What the present is to be, is cautiously kept secret, and the girls have a world of contrivances to conceal it; such as working when they are out on visits, and the others are not with them; getting up in the morning before day-light, &c. Then on the evening before Christmas-day, one of the parlours is lighted up by the children, into which the parents must not go. A great yew-bough is fastened on the table, at a little distance from the wall, a multitude of little tapers are fastened in the bough, but so as not to catch it till they are nearly burnt out; and coloured paper, &c., hangs and flutters from the twigs. Under this bough the children lay in great order the presents they mean for their parents, still concealing in their pockets what they intend for each other. Then the parents are introduced, and each presents his little gift, and then bring out the rest one by one from their pockets, and present them with kisses and embraces. Where I witnessed this scene, there were eight or nine children, and the eldest daughter and the mother wept aloud for tenderness: and the tears ran down the face of the father, and he clasped all his children so tight to his breast, it seemed as if he did it to stifle the sob that was rising within him. I was very much affected. The shadow of the bough and its appendages on the wall, and arching over on the ceiling, made a pretty picture; and then the raptures of the very little ones, when at last the twigs and their needles began to take fire and *snap*. Oh it was a delight for them. On the next day, in the great parlour, the parents lay out on the table, the presents for the children; a scene of more sober joy succeeds, as on this day, after an old custom, the mother says privately to each of her daughters, and the father to his sons, that which he has observed most praiseworthy, and that which was most faulty in their conduct.—COLERIDGE'S *Friend*.

## SELF-SUPPORTING DISPENSARIES.

We are always glad when we can make our Magazine a vehicle for communicating information, respecting any plans really calculated to improve the condition of the poor. There is no want of a benevolent disposition in the present day. Thousands, we believe we may say\* millions, of pounds, are annually expended in this country, with a view to relieve poverty and distress. It is, however, to be feared that many of the plans pursued, have no other tendency than to increase, and to perpetuate, the evils which they profess to remove. But, of late, sounder views on this subject have begun to prevail; and it is acknowledged that almost the only way, by which we can really benefit the poor, is to teach them prudence and forethought, and to lead them to depend, for their maintenance and comfort, upon their own industry, forbearance, and frugality.

Among the benevolent institutions which are based upon this principle, there is scarcely one more valuable than a Dispensary, which was established originally at Southam, in Warwickshire, under the title of a *Self-supporting Dispensary*. The outline of the plan, which is all that we can pretend to give at present, is this;—the institution is intended for persons principally supporting themselves by labour; and these persons, by making, when in health, a small weekly contribution, become entitled to medical advice and assistance in illness; while the sums contributed, being thrown into a common fund, afford a remuneration to the medical attendant, under the direction of a committee. Of this plan we shall best, perhaps, perceive the advantages, by considering the following contingencies to which a poor man, unfortunately, is but too liable. We will suppose him to be sober, industrious, and prudent; we will even take the favourable supposition that, after his marriage, he is both able and willing to maintain himself and his family in independence; but who can secure him from illness in the person of himself, his wife, or his children? and if this calamity befall him, what, in the great majority of cases, is the consequence? Without imagining any unfair charges to be made, his doctor's bill is likely to absorb all his small savings, if not to involve him for a considerable time in debt. With this dismal prospect, it is well known that many a poor man sickens and pines, perhaps dies, of maladies which might have been easily removed by medical skill, in an early stage of the complaint. His other alternatives are, to apply to the presumptuous ignorance of the Quack-Doctor; or, what is yet more probable, to avail himself of the ready resource of the Parish, and thus to take the first step in that downward and slippery path of pauperism, from which few are able afterwards to recover themselves. The principal and most important feature of the Self-supporting Dispensaries is, that they afford a protection against every one of these evils. The contributor, or assurer (for these Dispensaries are nothing but societies of mutual assurance against sickness), is able to obtain sound medical aid; to obtain it from the moment when he begins to fail, and that without forfeiting his independence, without impairing his resources, and without enduring those melancholy forebodings of want, which press so heavily on the mind of the sick labourer or artisan, and aggravate the pains and the dangers of his complaint; and this advantage appears to be so great, that hardly another word need be said to recommend the system.

\* See, in the *Pietas Londinensis*, what sums are given away in the Metropolis alone.

We must, however, point out, that the poor man is by no means the sole party benefited by it. To the medical practitioner it must be no small gain to receive a reasonable remuneration for his time and trouble, without resorting to that system, which must be so painful to a man of liberal education and feelings, the farming the sick poor, for the wretched pittance which parochial economists will give; often to the individual who will undertake the job at the lowest bidding.

It may be added, as a further and indirect advantage of this system, that it tends to give a general encouragement to that spirit of independence in the poorer classes, which our poor-laws, aided by the thoughtless and indiscriminate manner in which private charity is too often dispensed, tend so fearfully to weaken. And we must also observe, that it is in perfect accordance with the spirit of reciprocal aid and co-operation,—with the apostolical precept of *bearing one another's burdens*,—which distinguishes all associations of mutual assurance, all Friendly Societies formed upon sound views and calculations, in contrast to the less social principle of Savings' Banks.

The Self-supporting Dispensaries, unquestionably, are principally suited to towns. There are, however, but few of our larger villages without a sufficiently skilful surgeon and apothecary; and a few adjoining parishes, although small, may combine together, and afford enough contributors for the establishment and support of one of these institutions.

In their perfection, these Dispensaries should be entirely dependent on the contributions of the benefit (or free) members, without any further aid from their richer neighbours, than their countenance and their superior information in managing the funds. In some cases, however, Honorary members are admitted; and their subscriptions go toward the expenses of the outfit, toward paying the rent of the house, and procuring for the patients the advantages of wine, and of some medicines, and other comforts more costly than the regular income of the Dispensary can afford to supply.

It is not, however, our intention to enter into the details of this plan at present. As we before said, a Dispensary on this principle was first established at Southam, under the direction of Mr. H. L. Smith, a liberal and enlightened, and truly humane, surgeon of that place. The same gentleman has since been instrumental in planting them at Derby, Burton-upon-Trent, Coventry, Willesbourn, Atherston, Rugby, and other places. Where they have been allowed fair play, and have experienced that firm and cordial support, which is always requisite for the first establishment of any plan likely to affect existing interests, they have invariably been attended with excellent success. And we doubt whether it would be possible, in the present day, to point out another plan, better calculated to promote the real and substantial interests of the labouring classes.

G. C.

LET us never exercise cruelty upon the smallest creature that is within our power, but ever remember, that every thing which breathes is the object of Divine benevolence; that they who would receive mercy from God, are expected to practise it towards all that have life; and that the truly merciful man will be merciful to his beast.—MRS. TRIMMER.

I WOULD advise all in general, that they would take into serious consideration the true and genuine ends of knowledge; that they seek it not either for pleasure, or contention, or contempt of others, or for profit, or fame, or for honour and promotion, or such like adulterate or inferior ends: but for merit and emolument of life, that they may regulate and perfect the same in charity.—BACON.



## ENGLISH PROSE WRITERS.

## No. V. SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH was the fourth son of Walter Raleigh, Esq., of Fardel, near Plymouth. He studied at Oriel College, Oxford, for a short time, but, when only seventeen, was one of a hundred gentlemen whom Queen Elizabeth allowed to assist the Protestants in France. He served afterwards in the Netherlands, under Sir John Norris, in 1578; the next year he joined an unsuccessful expedition to America; and distinguished himself, in 1580, in Ireland. In 1581 he was introduced to court, in the following manner:—"Coming out of Ireland to the English Court in good habit (his clothes being then a considerable part of his estate,) he found the Queen walking, till, meeting with a plashy place, she seemed to scruple going thereon; presently Raleigh cast and spread his new plush cloak on the ground, whereon the Queen trod, greatly rewarding him afterwards with many suits, "for his so free and seasonable tender of so fair a foot-cloth." He availed himself of his court-favour, to obtain letters patent for discovering unknown countries, and took possession of that part of America which is called Virginia, after the virgin Queen.

Upon his return, he was returned to Parliament for Devonshire, and soon afterwards knighted. He was also favoured by a licence, to sell wines throughout the kingdom (!) In the following years he sent out his own fleet twice to Virginia, and introduced tobacco into England. Queen Elizabeth had no objection to this herb, as it was likely to prove a valuable article of commerce; but King James, her successor, hated it, and even wrote a book against it.

Sir Walter advanced rapidly in the Queen's favour, and was enriched by her with places and lands. The Earl of Leicester, his former patron, became jealous, and set up in opposition to him Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. He continued in favour, and engaged in various public employments, both civil and military, till 1593, when he justly offended the Queen by an intrigue with the daughter of Sir Nicholas Throgmorton. Both he and his partner in guilt were confined for several months, and, when set at liberty, forbidden the court. He married her, however, and lived with her afterwards in the strictest conjugal affection. The next year he was entirely restored to favour, and enriched by his royal mistress with the Manor of Sherborne, that had been alienated from the church.

From this time to 1597, his enterprising spirit was gratified by two expeditions to Guiana, the first of which was conducted by himself, and by his being employed at sea in active service against the Spaniards. On the fall of his rival, Essex, he disgraced himself by entreating Sir Robert Cecil to show him no mercy. Though Sir Robert took his advice, there was no sincere friendship between him and Raleigh: and on the accession of James, the latter was stripped of his preferments, and accused and condemned of high-treason. The real cause of his disgrace can only be conjectured: a *Raleigh's plot* was spoken of and generally believed; but the barbarous partiality, overbearing manner, and foul language of the attorney-general, Coke, prevents us from accepting his condemnation as a proof of his guilt.

After being kept for a month at Winchester, in daily expectation of death, he was reprieved and confined for some years in the Tower, where he composed many works, particularly the first volume of an excellent History of the world. After twelve years' imprisonment, he received a commission from the king to explore the gold-mines of Guiana. It

was said, that he might have had a formal pardon for £700; but that Sir F. Bacon assured him, that a commission from the king, with power of martial law over his officers and men, was virtually a pardon for the past, and that he had better keep his money for the purpose of the expedition. The expedition was unsuccessful; the Spanish monarch enraged, by the burning of a town; and, in spite of the just reasoning of Bacon, James had the meanness to have Sir Walter executed in consequence of his former attainer. He was executed in Old Palace Yard, October 29th, 1618. He entreated the spectators, that if any disability of voice or dejection of countenance should appear in him, they would impute it to the disorder of his body (he was suffering from the ague), rather than to any dismayedness of mind. He confessed his grievous offences, and begged the prayers of all who heard him. Having fingered the axe, he said, smiling, to the sheriff, "This is a sharp medicine, but it is a sound cure for all diseases." The executioner knelt down and asked him forgiveness, which Raleigh, laying his hand upon his shoulder, granted. Then being asked, which way he would lay himself on the block, he answered, "So the heart be right, it is no matter which way the head lies." After a little pause, he lifted up his hand, and his head was struck off at two blows, his body never shrinking nor moving.

MERE transient enjoyment is not to be taken into the account of happiness for an intellectual and immortal being. That man alone can be called happy, who is at peace with his own heart and with his Maker.—SOUTHEY.

HE that hath light within his own clear breast,  
May sit in the centre, and enjoy bright day;  
But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,  
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun:  
Himself is his own dungeon.—MILTON.

WE are surrounded by motives to piety and devotion, if we would but mind them. The poor are designed to excite our liberality; the miserable our pity; the sick our assistance; the ignorant our instruction; those that are fallen our helping hand. In those who are vain, we see the vanity of the world; in those who are wicked, our own frailty. When we see good men rewarded, it confirms our hope; and when evil men are punished, it excites our fear.—BISHOP WILSON.

UPON THE SIGHT OF TWO SNAILS.—There is much variety even in creatures of the same kind. See there, two snails; one hath an house, the other wants it: yet both are snails, and it is a question whether case is the better; that which hath an house hath more shelter, but that which wants it, hath more freedom; the privilege of that cover is but a burden; you see, if it has but a stone to climb over, with what stress it draws up that beneficial load: and, if the passage proves strait, finds no entrance; whereas, the empty snail makes no difference of way. Surely, it is always an ease, and sometimes an happiness, to have nothing; no man is so worthy of envy, as he that can be cheerful in want.—BISHOP HALL.

FILIAL LOVE AND DUTY.—Pomponius Atticus, the friend and correspondent of Cicero, making the funeral oration at the death of his mother, did protest, that living with her threescore and seven years, *he was never reconciled unto her*; because, (take the comment with the text,) there never happened betwixt them the least jar which needed reconciliation.—FULLER.

I LOVE such mirth as does not make friends ashamed to look upon one another next morning; nor men, that cannot well bear it, to repent the money they spend when they be warmed with drink: and take this for a rule, you may pick out such times and such companies, that you may make yourself merrier for a little than a great deal of money, for "Tis the company and not the charge that makes the feast."—ISAAC WALTON.

## FAMILIAR ILLUSTRATIONS OF NATURAL PHENOMENA.

## NO. V. THE ATMOSPHERE.

WHENEVER we look about us with attention, we find objects which must raise our admiration, at the wisdom and goodness of God who made them all. But some of these require a great deal of study to understand them; and others are so constantly before our eyes, that we scarcely think about them. This is particularly the case with the air. Millions of people are enjoying all the benefits of this element, every hour of their lives, without knowing, or rather, without reflecting upon, the wonderful manner in which such a number of useful purposes are brought about, by what appears so simple a thing as the air. We will point out a few of these, and endeavour to show how much our comfort, and even our existence, depend upon them.

The air which surrounds the whole earth, as a light thin coating, extending to a considerable height above its surface, is composed of several gases, quite different in their properties. One of these, which forms the greatest part of the air, is absolutely necessary for the support of animal life. If the air is deprived of it, any animal instantly dies. Another part of it is, alone, *destructive* of animal life, but is necessary for the life of vegetables. Thus, without the atmosphere, neither animal nor vegetable could continue to exist. Even any considerable change in the lightness or heaviness of the air, would be fatal to animals. Those who climb very high mountains, and thus reach the higher and thinner parts of the air, find a great difficulty in breathing, are unable to exert themselves, to lift weights, or even to stoop: and sometimes are compelled to come down, from the danger of breaking some blood-vessel, in consequence of the outward pressure of the air being taken off. On the other hand, those who go down in diving-bells, and have the air which they breathe, pressed into a narrow space by the water above them, find inconvenience from that cause. We have here, therefore, reason to be thankful for that provision of Providence, which has regulated both the nature and the *weight* of the atmosphere, to the use of the creatures which he has formed to live in it.

A second most useful property of the air, is to convey sounds, not only in a rude way, by making us hear loud noises or low murmurs, but by exactly representing those most delicate inflections of voice, which constitute speech. It can be proved, by direct experiment made by the air-pump, a machine by which the air can be drawn out of a large glass receiver, that if a bell be hung in such a glass, and the air be pumped out, there is no *sound* whatever produced, although the clapper be struck against the bell. Sound is, in fact, a vibration, something like waves, carried along from one part of the air to another. It does not move so fast as light, as any one may perceive, who observes a gun fired from a considerable distance. He will see the flash some time before he hears the report.

The air, then, which we breathe, is exactly fit for conveying such sounds as our voices are able to produce, and our ears are fitted to hear. And it is not *every* kind of *air* which will do this. If a man's lungs are filled by breathing some gases, which can be produced by chemical means, the sounds which his voice is able to make can scarcely be heard. And no doubt, this difference would be much more perceptible, if the *ears* were also surrounded by such an elastic fluid, instead of common air.

Without the air, we should be in a state of utter silence: if the air were much different from what it

is, we should never have conversed. All language, all communication of thought by speech, could never have existed. And without speech, what would have been the condition of mankind?

The air has also a very material influence upon our sense of sight. It is by the action of the atmosphere only, that the change from day to night comes on so gradually, indeed so imperceptibly, that the eyes easily accommodate themselves to it. Had we little or no atmosphere, the rising of the sun would cause a sudden change, from utter darkness to the light of the brightest noon; and at his setting, we should again be instantly left in darkness. It is almost needless to observe, with how much beauty this beneficial change is now accompanied. All the glowing colours which decorate the heavens, at the rising and the setting sun, the thousand brilliant hues in which the clouds are bathed, are all owing to the atmosphere.

The air has also an effect upon our vision, all day long: and it is an effect which is far less known than that of twilight. It is by means of the atmosphere, that we are able to see objects in the day-time, in whatever part of the sky the sun may be. No object can be seen except by the light which it reflects or suffers to pass through it, unless, indeed, it be seen as a dark spot, intercepting the light which comes from some other object. Now the air *reflects* light in all directions, so that some light always falls upon what would otherwise be the dark side of an object, and renders it visible. We can scarcely bring ourselves to imagine, what would be the appearance of the most familiar objects, if those parts of them only were visible, upon which either the direct light of the sun, or the light reflected from other large objects, fell. But they would certainly appear very distorted; and their shapes would probably be so strange, that we should scarcely recognise them. Besides this, all the part of the sky, except that in which the sun happened to be, would, without the atmosphere appear totally dark, even at noon-day. To use the beautiful language of Mr. Whewell, "It is the atmosphere which converts sun-beams into daylight, and fills the space in which we are with illumination." C.

ANNIVERSARIES IN DECEMBER.  
MONDAY, 16th.

1653 Cromwell inaugurated Lord Protector of England.

## TUESDAY, 17th.

O SAPIENTIA.—This day still retains its place in the reformed calendar, but why it should, is no where satisfactorily accounted for, and much ingenuity, to as little purpose, has been exerted to explain its true meaning, some asserting it to have been dedicated to one of the eleven thousand virgins of that name, who suffered martyrdom with St. Ursula; but the more rational supposition seems to be, that its name came from the beginning of the Anthem used on this day in honour of the Advent of our Lord, *O Sapientia quæ ex ore*.

## FRIDAY, 20th.

1810 Sir Francis Bourgeois bequeathed his fine collection of paintings to Dulwich College for the use of the public. The College has erected a noble gallery, in which they are exhibited.

1812 Sabrina, one of the Azore Islands, sunk in the ocean.

## SATURDAY, 21st.

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE.—After the brief enumeration of the Apostles, in the first chapter of the Acts, no further mention is made in the Scriptures, of St. Thomas; and it is, therefore, presumed, that immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost, he travelled into India, and the immense regions of Scythia, where he preached with such eminent success, that a Christian church may be traced to the earliest times. He suffered martyrdom from the Brahmins A.D. 73. His festival was instituted in 1130, and has been ever since observed in all Christian countries.

1813 The Allied Armies, consisting of 100,000 Russians, Prussians, Austrians, and British troops, passed the Rhine.

## SUNDAY, 22nd.

## FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

1690 The Great Comet, as it is called, first became visible.

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